

Security Quickie 1

The Information Security Office will be sending out security reminders a few times a month. It will be a quick note or reminder regarding security awareness and standard security policy. This week's note (more of a longy than a quickie) is from the September edition of the Security Blanket.

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Helpful Hints - Password Guidelines

Since your password acts as a personal key, it provides access to computer systems and applications. It also gives each user certain permissions and capabilities.

You should select passwords according to the following guidelines:

- Passwords should contain a minimum of 8 alphanumeric characters (a mix numbers and of upper and lower case letters) including at least one special character. You can use pass "phrases" to help you do this. For example, 'Can I have three scoops of ice cream?' can become "C1h3soic?" as a password. It is easier to remember than random characters and just as secure.
- Passwords should be changed at least every 60 days. Never re-use a password.
- System default and initial passwords should be changed immediately upon receipt. (Passwords like "administrator", "guest", "user", null passwords, etc. need to be changed ASAP)
- Passwords should not be written down or recorded on-line in any form, and passwords should not be shared with anybody.
- Passwords should not be words or combinations of words, even if combined with other alphanumeric or special characters. (For a poor example: "Hawks6%")
- Passwords should not be a user ID in any form, all the same alphanumeric character, or published examples of good passwords.



With password-cracking tools easily available on the Internet today, poor passwords can be cracked in seconds, while more difficult ones (8+ mixed characters) can take hours or days. Also, remember that your password is **your** personal key to your workstation or network. If someone else uses your password, his or her activities will be recorded as being done by **you**.

Have you changed your password recently?